

Up Rope

FOUNDED BY
HERB AND JAN CONN

VOLUME 56 ISSUE 3

SUMMER 2001

2001 MS CLUB OFFICIALS

Chairman:

Mack Patton Muir
mackmuir@edisaurus.com
<http://www.edisaurus.com>
work 202-401-8264
home 703-768-5724

Vice-Chair:

John Smith
H(703)532-0264
W(703)453-2897
johnw.smith@usaa.com

Treasurer: Dave Green

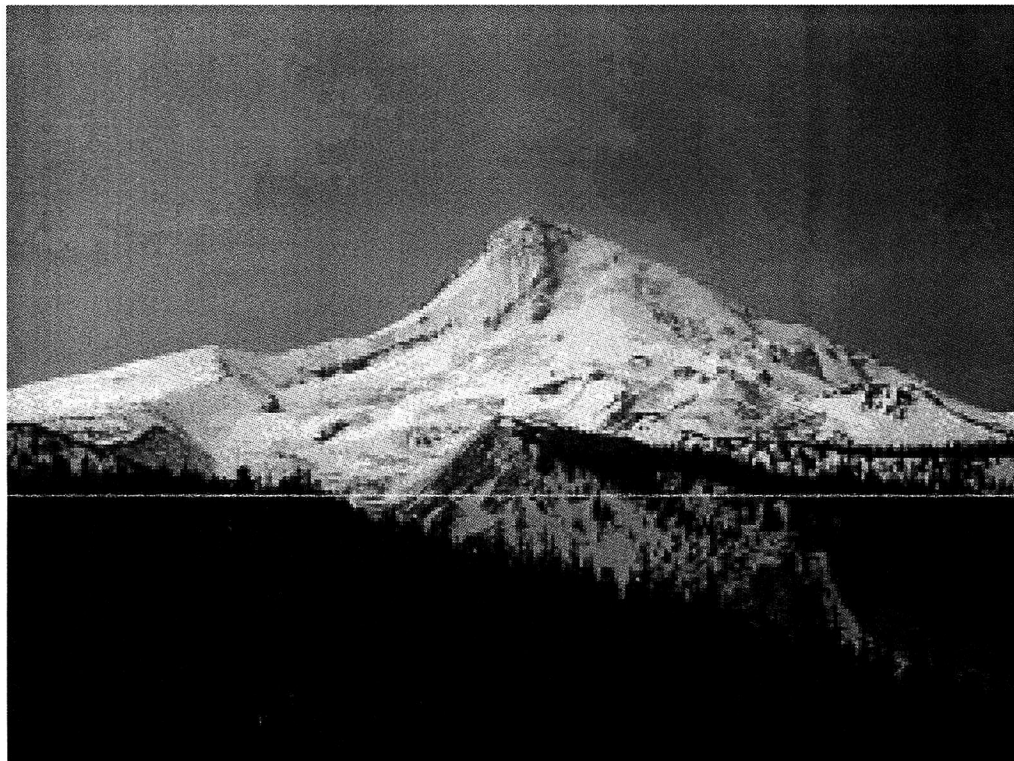
(H) 703 536 5189
(W) 202-366-9477
dkgreenva@hotmail.com or

Secretary:

Charlotte Bonilla
Csbonilla@aol.com

Up Rope Editor:

Vincent Penoso
P.O. Box 221431
Chantilly, VA 20153
vpenoso@earthlink.net



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Shawangunks	2
Seneca Trail Work	5
Nelson Rocks Preserve	5
Climber's Calender	3

ROCKFALL

HAVE A NICE
SUMMER.

SEE YOU IN
SEPTEMBER.

Mt Hood, May 2001

Mack Muir and I had climbed Mt Hood in June of 2000 as a consolation prize, having been weathered off Rainier for the second straight year. Standing on the summit after walking up the South Side Route, we looked down the precipitous cliffs of the north side and, in a mutual fit of fatigue-induced bravado, decided "that looks like fun, let's do that side next year!". With my daughter's wedding planned for June 2001, May seemed like the best shot I'd have this year, so here we were flying into Portland.

We had awesome views of the north side as we flew in to Portland on Sunday, May 13th. Make a note to yourself that whenever you fly to Portland, sit on the left side of the airplane! By mid-afternoon, we had parked our car at about 3800 feet at the old Cooper Spur ski area, where the road was blocked due to snow nine miles short of our intended campsite. We carried our big packs up the x-country ski trail which only took two and a half miles to climb the 2000 feet the road took nine miles to do. We were on patches of snow right away,

and by the time we got to camp at about 5800 ft the snow cover was pretty thick. We were thrilled to find the 1930s vintage Tilley Jane Ski Hut open, unoccupied, and modestly stocked with firewood. No tent for us this trip! After a quick look around we dumped our packs, flew back down the trail, and drove back to Hood River and the Vagabond Lodge for the night.

Monday morning, we were at the Hood River Ranger Station when they opened. We checked in, gave the ranger our plan for the week, drove back to the Cooper Spur trailhead and headed on up with the rest of our gear. Unfortunately, the weather pattern for the next few days was starting to settle in, and it was several days before we saw the mountain again. We had hoped to get in two routes on Hood, then scramble up St. Helens at the end of the week. It was not to be.

Monday afternoon was devoted to settling in, followed by a hike up to the Cooper Spur shelter, a cave-like rock hut at about 6800 feet, where the rain had turned to snow.

(continued on page 4)

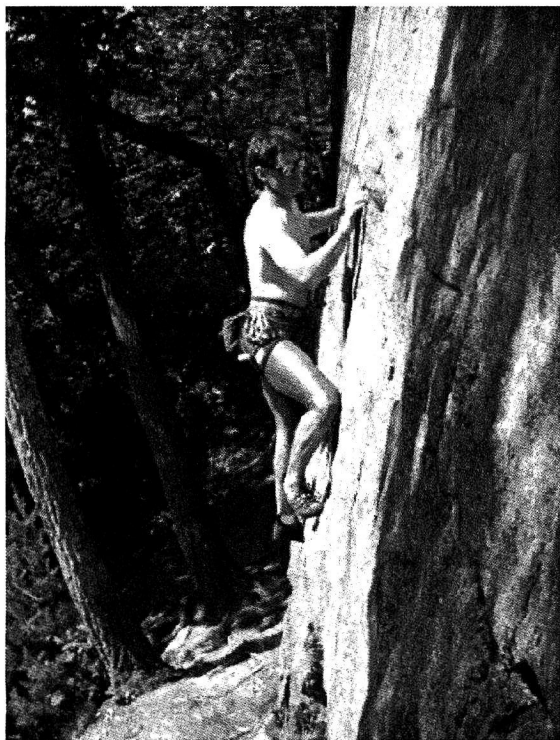
Shawangunks, NY June 9th & 10th, 2001

After much shuffling around with carpooling and such, nine of us made it to breakfast at the College Diner Saturday morning. I teamed up with Christina for Saturday and lost track of where everyone else went.

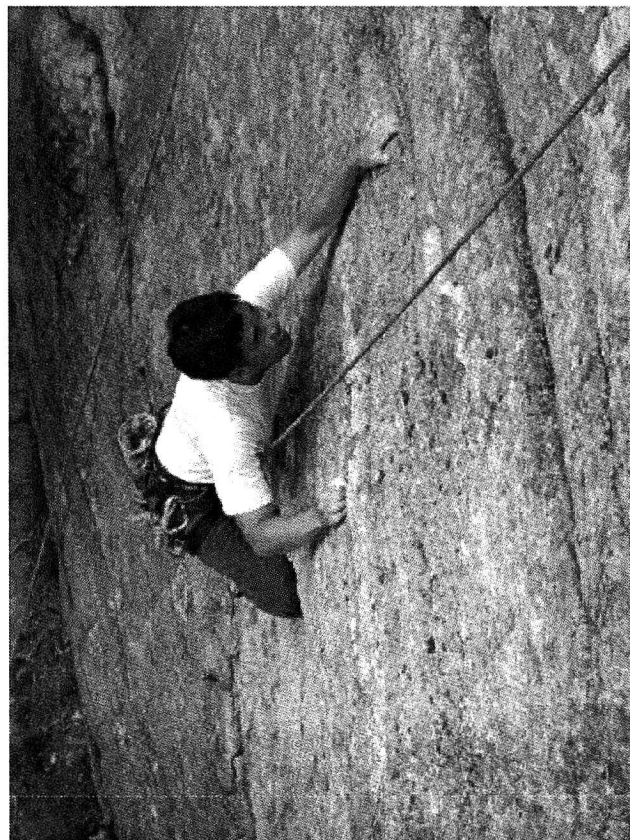
After doing Classic (5.7) for a warm-up – and to introduce Christina to Gunks style climbing – we headed on to The Last Will Be First, a 5.6 climb I had never done before. What a terrific route! It was a typical Gunks 5.6 with horizontal cracks on near vertical faces and several moves that required a little bit of thought and commitment before going for it. One place in particular presented a situation where one could not positively identify the next handhold, and one was forced to just make the move and trust that a hold would appear – and it did. Good route, but probably not for someone just breaking into 5.6 level leading.

Sleepwalk (5.7) was next on our list. I selected this route as I wanted to top-rope Ent's Line afterwards, time permitting. I had done Sleepwalk previously and remembered thinking it was an easy-for-grade route; however, after checking my notes, I realized that my first time on this route I took the 5.8 variation finish; hence I wanted to get on it again. We did only the first pitch which, according to Williams' guide book, is the only 5.7 section on the route. Frankly, I did not find any 5.7 moves on the pitch, but maybe I'm used to the thin face climbing since Christina got pumped enough on the route to decide not to do the second pitch. No big deal as the second pitch is rated 5.4. There was another party getting ready to ascend Ant's Line and it would have been inconsiderate of me to set up a top rope right next to them so I didn't do Ent's Line as planned.

Sunday Harold decided his (non-climbing) injuries were still bothering him and declined to climb. Christina had already gone home, as planned. That left seven of us. Hung and Rose took off separately and were later seen on Disneyland (5.6), Layback (5.5), and Horseman (5.5). Five of us, Simon, Paul, Rob, Jeff, and I hiked to nearly the end of Near Trapps (to get away from the crowds).



Simon Carr



Jeff Matsu

Simon led Far From The Madding Crowd (5.8+) and set up a top-rope on it for the rest of us. I led I'm Ok, You're Ok (5.9) and also set up a top-rope. After everyone had taken turns on these two, we used one of the top ropes on a variation of Live and Let Die (5.9+) with an X rating (no protection – hence the top rope).

I was the first to try this and fell off on the first couple of attempts at the crux. My Carderock mentality was manifesting itself: I saw the handhold a few feet to the left, but automatically assumed it was off limits. After falling off again, Simon suggested using the hold way off to the left and, sure enough, that hold was necessary to make the move at 5.9 level.

We had planned to do something more serious, but Simon wasn't feeling well so we skidaddled on to Inverted Layback, a 5.9 neither of us had done before. I took the first pitch lead which contains the crux move for which the route is named. The first part of the pitch was almost boring – 5.6 at best. Then came the inverted layback roof/flake. Turned out to be more of an intimidating head-game sequence rather than a hard set of moves. Strenuous, to be sure, but not really as hard as it had first appeared. Simon came second and Jeff third, and none fell off nor gave any indication of the sequence being difficult. Simon then took the lead for the second pitch and we finished the climb.

By the time we hiked back down to the base of the climb, it was mid-afternoon and the drivers were anxious to head back home, so we called it quits for the weekend. Christina Barry, Jeff Matsu, Harold Lattin, Paul Torelli, Hung Ly, Rose Viozzi, Simon Carr, Rob Whitestone, and yours truly,

Pete Grant

®

CLIMBER'S CALENDER

August 12th - 18th

North Cascades, Washington

Spend a week in the beautiful shadow of Forbidden Peak at Boston Basin. The peaks are moderate or easy and the altitude is low with only the fickle Cascade weather to temper spirits (plan on getting wet). Summit attempts can be made on easy peaks like Boston and Sahale or the more moderate Forbidden or Torment peaks via several interesting routes. Shark's Fin Tower can provide a diversion for technical rock climbers with routes as easy as 5.2 or as hard as you might want to make them (in mountaineering boots). Minimum requirements: glacier travel experience and easy (5.0) rock experience. Contact trip leader for approval.

Trip Leader: Mack Muir at mackmuir@edisaurus.com or (703) 768-5724.

August 18th (Saturday)

Shaffer Rocks, Pennsylvania -- with Belay Escape Clinic

Avoid the heat of the other local crags and head up to Shaffer Rock in PA just north of the Maryland. It been a while since the club has had a trip Shaffer Rock and for those who haven't been there, there is good climbing for all. The climbs range from beginner to expert (5.12). Meeting place is the McDonalds off exit 11 on I-270 (south on 355), meeting time 7:30 AM, it takes about an 1 1/2 hours to get there from DC.

Belay Escape Clinic: Saturday, August 19, 9 AM, Shaffer Rock, PA; along with the Club Climb at that crag. The most important technique in self rescue is escaping the belay, allowing you reach a cell phone to call for help or summon other nearby climbers to assist in reaching the injured climber above you. We will practice the skill of locking off the belay device, freeing your hands, and transferring the weight of the climber above to a ground anchor or belay station with a prusik and a sling, or cordalette. After a demonstration, you will have the opportunity to practice the technique. Please register in advance with the trip leader and bring your belay device(s), slings, cordalette, prusik loops, locking and snaplink carabiners, helmet, and either pro to construct a ground anchor or long slings for boulders.

Overnight Stay in Nearby Cabin: the PATC has a cabin, the Hermitage, not far from the base of the cliffs. If you want to stay there Friday and/or Saturday night please contact the trip leader ASAP. Space is limited. A small contribution towards the cost of the cabin would be appreciated.

Trip Leader: Dave Hluchy at oriolesfan61@yahoo.com or 301-791-0146 (home).

September 1st - 3rd (Labor day weekend)

Shawangunks, New York (multi-pitch)

The Annual Labor Day Weekend trip to Shawan "gunks"-- a multi-pitch lead climbing area. All participants must have had training or experience in leading or seconding trad routes. An exception can be made only if an experienced climber agrees to take a newbie under his/her wing and assume full responsibility for the new person's training and safety for the entire duration of the event. Experience in leading sport routes is insufficient to qualify for trad leading or seconding.

There's not much more I can say beyond what's in the guide books. Basically, ratings are fair, and route descriptions reasonable. Most climbs are two or three pitches. Trapps is the recommended climbing area for first-timers. After topping out, either rappel from established anchors or hike out to Uberfall and descend to the undercliff road there. I personally recommend the walkdown. It's a wonderful chance to discuss the just completed climb with your partner; besides, there are times when rappelling interferes with others who are doing routes in the vicinity of rappel lines. After finishing each climb, look around the Uberfall area for other group members and consider switching partners, etc.. For information, see <<http://www.dietix.net/climbing/gunks/200109/Default.asp?tripid=010901>>

Meeting time: 6:30 a.m.

Meeting place: College Diner, New Paltz, NY

Trip leader: Pete Grant at grantpk@msn.com or (703) 731-6925 (cell)

October 20th - 21st

Seneca Rocks, West Virginia (Fall Trail Maintenance Trip)

All PATC members and friends are invited to attend. Here is your chance to help improve a favorite multi-pitch climbing area. Participants stay free at the Seneca Shadows Campground. The annual Chili Cook off at the Gendarme.

Trip leader: Bill Wright at william.wright@uspto.gov or (703) 860-3752

December 28th - January 1st (New Years)

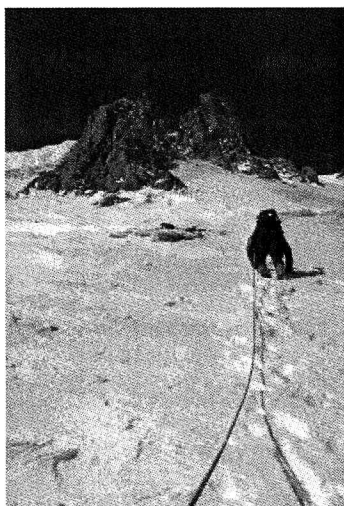
North Conway, New Hampshire

Tentative New Years trip to New Hampshire for ice climbing and mountaineering on Mt. Washington. Detail to follow.

Trip leader: Jim Pasterczyk at james.pasterczyk@uspto.gov

Mt. Hood (con't)

At this point, we'd not decided whether our first route was going to be the Cooper Spur or the Sunshine Route. The hut was a good cache point for either, so we did a little exploration, then went back to Tilley Jane for the night. Tuesday continued grey and rainy, but we hiked back up to the Cooper Spur hut, then dropped down onto the Elliot glacier to see if we could reconnoiter up glacier toward the Sunshine Route. I'd say our visibility averaged maybe 150 feet, with an occasional clearing to a hundred yards or so. We'd stick in a wand every now and then, as we hopped from rock island to rock island. At some point, mid afternoon, we realized we were about to stumble into the upper icefall of the Elliott, so left a wand at our highpoint and made our soggy way back down to camp, caching our technical gear in the hut on the way down. Lest you think we'd developed an overly naive faith in the honesty of our fellow man, the fact is, since we'd left the ranger station, we hadn't seen any fellow-men. We had the whole north side of the mountain to ourselves.



Mack Muir

By this time, with the temperature dropping below freezing, and snow falling at our camp, we realized we weren't likely to get two routes in, so committed ourselves to the Sunshine Route. Wednesday we pushed our exploration on up the Elliott, through the ramp between the upper and lower icefalls, and up the Snowdome to 8500 feet. Visibility varied wildly from virtual white-out to occasional seconds-long glimpses of the upper reaches of the peak. The snow conditions were quite tiring, and Mack and I traded off breaking trail through sometimes thigh deep new snow. The angle of the slope at this point was not such that we were concerned about avalanche, but we were well aware that the higher, steeper slopes would be in no shape that day or the next. At least it wasn't snowing any more by late Wednesday! We didn't get back to camp 'till about 8:30 pm, but now the route through the glacier was wanded, so we were optimistic about quick progress when we finally went for it. We knew Thursday was a blow-off, as we had to give the new snow time to consolidate, so decadently stayed in our bags till around eight the next morning. The winds Wednesday night and Thursday were pretty brisk.

Thursday was spent hiking around, and retrieving a beer cache we had discovered in a snowdrift outside the old Cloud Cap Inn, used now only by the Hood River Crag Rats climbing club. Honest, we're convinced it was lost!

We were up and out of camp at about 12:20 am Friday, and made good time up to the hut where we retrieved our gear and dropped down onto the Elliott where we roped up. We each carried about 15 metres of rope stuffed in our packs, so had about 20 between us. There was virtually no moon, but the sky was brilliantly clear and the stars were, well, like they are only in the mountains. It was fairly cold, and the wind was fresh, so we were able to work fairly hard without overheating. That was a good thing, since the cold and wind had worked together to create a hard crust on the new snow that would sometimes support us, and sometimes not. It was quite tiring, because you never knew when you'd drop through the crust up to your knee. We still managed to make good time across the glacier, only noticing one new crack that hadn't been there Wednesday. Remember folks, glaciers ARE alive. Just because you crossed there yesterday, doesn't mean it won't eat you today!

Conditions on the Snowdome were brutally disappointing. Where we had hoped to find firm climbing conditions on the 35° slope, we discovered worse crust than we'd dealt with on the glacier. At times we were reduced to crawling our way up the slope past the chaos of the icefall, as we found having more contact points allowed us to float better on the crust. First light found us at around 9000 feet, and not too long after that we donned sunglasses, as we discovered why the route was so named. The radiant heat started to get to me, especially since the hose to my Platypus had frozen. I stuck the hose into my pack, and in short order it had thawed so I could rehydrate.

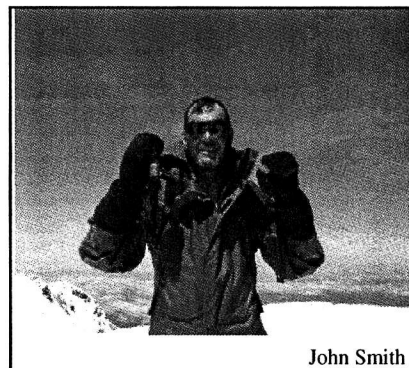
Now the climbing was getting interesting. Trying to get onto firmer

ground, we worked our way up and over Anderson Rock where we were reminded that there's really no good rock on Hood. It was firmer than the snow, but nerve-wrackingly loose. From there, we headed up toward Horseshoe Rocks, crossing a couple crevasses on good snow bridges. Mack had a little more excitement than he'd bargained for on a short steep bit of hard ice, but we chose to continue without crampons. He led across what passed for a bergschrund below Horseshoe Rocks, and we chose to pass the rocks to the east, contrary to conventional wisdom. By now the route was seriously steep, and given the hideously unstable nature of the rock, I decided to stick to the snow to Mack's left, as he tried an easy looking rock gully. What had appeared pretty casual, now revealed itself as an optical illusion, created by foreshortening. Mack found himself on loose rock that was close to vertical, with about a 2500 foot ride down if he came off. I was in no position to arrest any fall, as the snow was unconsolidated, and I was having trouble making any vertical headway myself. After some sporty traversing moves, he got himself out of the gully and into the snow, where we both managed to somehow levitate ourselves on up to the top of the Horseshoe Rocks formation.

At this point we stopped for our first real break, to eat, hydrate, and assess our plan. There was no disagreement. As late as we were, we had to go on to the top, as neither one of us wanted to contemplate going down what we'd come up. At this point, we figured we only had about 800 or a thousand vertical feet to go, and knew we could descend the South Side route so we climbed on up toward the small cornice marking the skyline of Cathedral Ridge. I set up a belay, not knowing what was on the other side of the cornice, and Mack punched through, only to start laughing. Instead of a knife edge, there was a highway, heading toward the summit. From that point on, we struggled up to the western rim of the crater through the sastrugi that perversely kept snagging the rope.

Once we gained the rim, we found the knife edge that Hood is so infamous for. It's only about a five minute problem, but the exposure of several hundred feet on the right pales in comparison to the thousands of feet on your left side. As I led along the one-boot-wide rim, only my pride kept me vertical. All I wanted to do was get down on my belly and ooch across, but I was afraid Mack would lose his balance laughing if I did, so I brazened it out. Ten minutes later we were on the summit and, unbelievably, were alone. Those of you who've been on top of Hood know how rare that is. Within ten minutes, we had the company of about eight other climbers, two of whom had come up the WyEast route on the East Side, the rest up the Hogsback finish of the South Side Route. The weather was spectacular.

Now all we had to do was go down the South Side, and somehow travel the thirty miles around the mountain to our car. THEN, climb another 2000 feet up to camp, get our stuff, and re-descend to the car. Piece-o-cake.



John Smith



POTOMACMOUNTAINCLUB.ORG

Seneca Trail Work

2001 Mack Muir

For those of you who missed the opportunity to shed sweat (and blood) on the Seneca climbers' trails over the weekend I thought a short report is in order.

First off, let me point out that there is now a new trail leading from the Hemlock Grove beneath the West Face to the Lower Slabs and then on to the tourist trail to the North Peak. The hope is that this will provide an alternative to climbers faced with a full West Side or give an option for one last short climb at the end of the day.

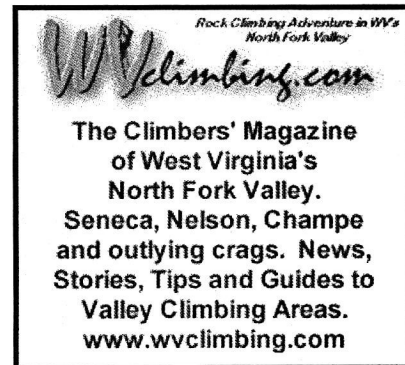
Saturday a total of over 25 people separated into three parties to tackle work on different areas of the rocks. One group reinforced the area below "Triple S" and made other improvements to the West Side trail immediately below the rocks. Another group helped prevent erosion and dangerous rock slides by blocking shortcuts on the boulder field below "The Burn" and "Ecstasy Junior", then completed an unfinished and severely eroded section of the connecting trail between

the South End and the East Side trail. The smallest, yet noisiest group employed chainsaws and battery powered drills to install wood steps over a section of trail leading up to the cave at the South End. Over the past couple of years this area has deteriorated to a bare rock slope that can cause a bit of concern with a heavy pack of gear or in wet conditions.

On Sunday we had a smaller group of around 15 head for the trails around the Lower Slabs. Starting from both ends the trail was changed from something that had been extremely eroded and sometimes nonexistent into one that is now totally usable. It is clearly marked (except for a sign at the Hemlock Grove end) and is routed to minimize erosion.

I didn't mention any names on purpose. I don't want to risk overlooking somebody or some group and I also feel that we should emulate the spirit of some early mountaineers -- when one summits the credit goes to the entire group, not individuals. Of course from me comes one more THANK YOU. The effort IS noticed and appreciated.

®



POTOMACMOUNTAINCLUB.ORG

Nelson Rocks Preserve

By Vincent Penoso

The West Virginia countryside from Seneca Rocks was all too familiar as we drove South on 33 to The Nelson Rocks Preserve. If you know where to look high on the ridgeline above where Highway 33 and south 28 intersect a little before the bridge, you can see Nelson Rocks. The drive isn't 15 minutes from Seneca shadows.

What is a pipesafe? A pipesafe is the gray nearly intractable metal object next to the information station where you've left the envelope containing the \$5 dollars it cost to get into the parking lot; the numbered day pass should be visible on your dash.

Driving into the parking lot you soon forget about the envelope as the view of an impressive rock buttress catches your attention. Ahhh, but you won't be climbing there. That's private property. You will however follow the road on this side of the creek (creek) a few hundreds yards and encounter the corridor trail. There is a beautifully built walkway (stairway to heaven) that leads to the 007 WALL and beats the Heck out of "Thigh Master" approach up the West Face of Seneca Rocks any millennium; the alternate start to Millennium (E-Z WIDER 5.5/5.6+) is exactly where you are when you step off.

007 WALL is great! The first climb we did on this side was EZ-WIDER (5.6+, 2-pitches). The first pitch of this beautiful sport route is excellent as a first lead climb. It starts out on really fat positive holds. The bolts are well within comfortable stances for the sketched out new leader and short folk like me. The mixed route is well protected and makes for a very sane first lead. The new leader can place his own pro, mosey up a little, clip into a hanger and start breathing again. The first pitch ends at a Pine tree belay. The second pitch is exposed and it follows the line of (7) bolts. I still managed to fire in some small cams and a nut or 2 between clips making this route a pure joy. I encountered loose holds that looked bomber so be careful. The rock commonly found in the general area affords the climber with ample library holds-you definitely have to

check them out. The move on the penultimate clip was fun and then you reach the bolted belay station. A breath taking view of the area awaits the persistent Klymer. Looking over to the crescendo wall if you look in the right place you can see a perfect window notched through and through the wall looking east This is something to look for (whiz-bang!). The Millennium route continues on from this anchor for another 7 or 8 pitches. Regardless of the nay-sayers, you are still climbing your ass off and gaining elevation! For those of you who are interested in Millennium visit (www.nelsonrocks.org).

The first pitches on the 007 WALL from EZ-WIDER are 5.8, 5.8, 5.4, 5.7, 5.7 and 5.7 respectively. They are within an absolutely beautiful view of the CRESCENDO WALL (for adults only). The 007 WALL is certainly recommended.

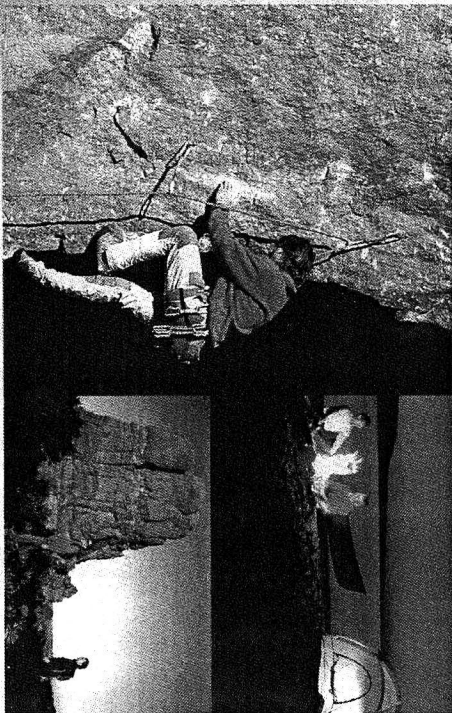
Jennifer Nugent, my patient climbing partner for this day (and every day), followed me up SOLER PLEXUS (5.6) on the west pillar amidst a cacophony of mixed expletives. I lead the crack formed on the left side of this tall detached flake wishing there was such a thing as a #14 CAMELOT to protect my whimpering #%!^%. There is a new route, newly bolted (STOLEN PLEXUS 5.6-TR) that runs straight up the face to the bolted top anchor. The top is airy, exposed and has a beautiful view of the valley. POLAR SEXES (5.7) is the right facing corner on the right side.

Our first visit to Nelson Rocks Preserve was a treasure hunt, will certainly not be out last. The area is still under development and so far the owners are delivering on the goods. A stocked "porta-poddy", ample parking, a golden staircase approach, a few rustic cabins with a view and un-crowded nearly virgin climbing await your next climbing adventure. Visit Nelson Rocks Preserve on line and get a glimpse of the on-line climbing guide to this and other West Virginia climbing destinations (WWW.WVCLIMBING.COM).

®

GALYAN'S IS ABOUT SPORTS

AND OUTDOOR ADVENTURE



GALYAN'S

FAIRLAKES 12501 Fairlakes Circle Fairfax (703) 803.0300
WASHINGTONIAN CENTER 2 Grand Corner Avenue Gaithersburg (301) 947.0200

POTOMACMOUNTAINCLUB.ORG

Up Rope Editor
Mountaineering Section
Potomac Appalachian Trail Club
118 Park Street, SE
Vienna, Virginia 22180

